

Frequently Asked Questions

Virginia Alternate Assessment Program



Virginia Alternate Assessment Program

Frequently Asked Questions by Teachers

Q1. What kind of student would take the VAAP?

The VAAP is an appropriate assessment for students with disabilities who have a current IEP. There should be documentation that the student has significant cognitive disabilities. Also, the student's present level of performance indicates the need for extensive, direct instruction and/or intervention in a curriculum framework based on the Aligned Standards of Learning. This student requires intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction in a variety of settings to show interaction and achievement. The high school student appropriate for the VAAP is working toward educational goals other than those prescribed for a Modified Standard Diploma, Standard Diploma, or Advanced Studies Diploma.

Q2. In which content areas can the VAAP be used?

The VAAP is available for the content areas of reading, mathematics, science, and history/social science. The Virginia Department of Education strongly recommends submission of evidence in all content areas being assessed by SOL tests for general education students at the same grade level.

Q3. In which grade levels can the VAAP be used?

The VAAP is available for students with disabilities who have an IEP in grades 3-8 and grade 11. If it is the practice of the school division for students with significant cognitive impairments to be enrolled in grade 11 for more than one year, the student participating in the VAAP should take the VAAP the first year of enrollment in grade 11.

Q3. Can students use accommodations on VAAP evidence?

Yes. A student may submit evidence using accommodations as specified within the student's current IEP. Hand-over-hand assistance (or full physical assistance) may not be used as evidence of student achievement.

Q4. Collecting samples of work for students submitting a VAAP takes a great deal of effort. Why do teachers have to prepare collections of evidence of student's work for this assessment?

Collecting work samples and student products is a routine part of the ongoing instructional process. Although additional work is required to organize the collection of evidence and to prepare it for submission, the VAAP provides students with disabilities a method of demonstrating their knowledge of ASOL content through non-traditional means. Given the broad range of methods available to students participating in the VAAP, a collection of evidence is the most flexible and efficient method for examining student performance.

Q5. How are functional skills and life skills assessed?

Individual achievement of academic skills is the single focus of the VAAP. Although functional skills such as self care, leisure activities, and domestic skills are important components of educational programs designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities, these skills are not evaluated in the VAAP.

Q6. What supporting documentation must be submitted with the Collection of Evidence?

A completed *2008-2009 Content Area Cover Sheet* for each content area being submitted and a completed and signed *Affidavit of Student Performance* must be included in each Collection of Evidence. The redesigned affidavit with multiple signature lines may be used for the entire collection. Also, each piece of evidence should have a completed SEI Tag .

Virginia Alternate Assessment Program

Frequently Asked Questions by Teachers

Q7. Can the VAAP Collection of Evidence be reviewed by parents and other school personnel?

Yes. The Collection of Evidence is available for review and feedback by the student, parents, and other school personnel as needed.

Q8. How is the VAAP scored?

The VAAP is submitted to the school division and scored locally. Scorers will receive training on the process of applying the scoring rubric to submitted evidence, use of the online scoring system, and other information pertinent to scoring the VAAP. The VAAP rubric, rubric addendum, and scoring rules are available in Section 7 of The Virginia Alternate Assessment Program Implementation Manual.

Q9. Why is my local school division scoring the VAAP and what is the online system?

Scoring VAAP entries is the joint responsibility of the local school division, the testing contractor, and the Virginia Department of Education. Local scoring teams are responsible for examining evidence and rating performance. The testing contractor and the Virginia Department of Education, via an online scoring system, will calculate proficiency and provide online reports. The scoring process will involve scorers examining submitted evidence for specific content area standards and applying a scoring rubric, rubric addendum, and scoring rules in order to assign a value to the evidence presented in a holistic manner. Once all evidence submitted for a specific VAAP entry has been scored, scorers will enter their ratings of student performance in the online scoring system.

Q10. What is a VAAP audit?

After the submission window for VAAP entries, the testing contractor will randomly select submitted entries for audit. The purpose of the VAAP audit is to ensure that scoring teams are correctly applying the scoring rubric and related scoring tools to submitted evidence.

Q11. How will I know if my school or student has been selected for an audit of his or her VAAP?

The Division Director of Testing will be notified in writing that a student's Collection of Evidence within the division has been selected for VAAP audit(s).